

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: Urban Design Committee

DATE, TIME AND

PLACE OF MEETING:

Wednesday, February 4, 2004, 3:00 p.m., Mayor's Conference Room, County-City Building, 1st Floor, 555 South 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS AND OTHERS

IN ATTENDANCE:

Members: Michael Eckert, JoAnne Kissel, Third World Oforah, Dennis Scheer (arrived at 3:18 p.m.), Gordon Scholz (departed at 4:13 p.m.), Scott Sullivan, and Kim Todd (arrived at 3:27 p.m.)

Others: Geri Rademacher, Mary Anne Wells (Olsson Associates); Trevor Hull (Erickson Sullivan Architects); Dallas McGee, Wynn Hjermstad, Jeff Cole (Urban Development); Ed Zimmer, Michele Abendroth (Planning Department)

STATED PURPOSE

OF THE MEETING:

Regular Meeting of the Urban Design Committee

Mr. Scholz called the meeting to order at 3:08 p.m. Mr. Zimmer suggested that agenda item number 3 (Update and design discussion on Douglas Grand Theatre) take place prior to agenda item number 2 (Antelope Valley "Big T" bridge; landscaping and abutment wall treatments.)

Approval of Meeting Notes of January 7, 2004

Mr. Eckert moved approval of the January 7, 2004 meeting minutes, seconded by Ms. Kissel. Eckert, Kissel, Oforah, Scholz, and Sullivan voting 'yes'; Todd and Scheer absent.

Update and Design Discussion on Douglas Grand Theatre (Urban Development Department)

Dallas McGee stated that they met last week with Douglas Theatre, who requested that they ask this Committee about changes to the exterior in order to reduce some of the cost. Douglas Theatre's architect, Michael Bott, and the city's design consultants, Erickson Sullivan Architects, are looking at alternatives to reduce the cost without compromising the integrity of the approved design. Dallas believes the changes that have been made still reflect the original concept. Douglas Theatre asked for a special meeting of the Urban Design Committee so as to meet a March 1st deadline. They would like to meet on February 25th. Mr. Zimmer suggested that this special meeting replace the regular March meeting. Mr. McGee stated that they have asked the architects be as creative as possible and then provide that to the Committee. Mr. Sullivan added that he feels the changes that have been made have not compromised the original plan.

Mr. Eckert asked if they could provide cost estimates for the facade treatments for the February 25th meeting. Mr. Scheer arrived at 3:18 p.m. He asked if Douglas is contributing more money since they are over-budget. Mr. McGee responded that they are. Mr. Oforah asked if the City is in a position to contribute more money if needed. Mr. McGee stated that they are not at this point.

Mr. Scheer asked what would happen if the Committee would not approve the changes on Feb. 25th. Mr. McGee stated that the redevelopment agreement with the developer states that they will pay for those

changes. Mr. Zimmer added that the decision has not been made and they are seeking genuine input. The Committee is advisor to the city departments and administration and the Mayor ultimately decides the city's position in this matter.

Antelope Valley "Big T" Bridge: Landscaping and Abutment Wall Treatments (Antelope Valley Design Team)

Mr. Sullivan distributed drawings of the proposed changes. He noted that one of the issues from the previous meeting was the MSE walls. He provided examples of the color and gradation texture. As they look at how to handle these walls, they have to be cognizant of the fact that the walls may settle differently. As far as the issue of making the walls look like something they aren't they felt the variation of texture was important.

Ms. Todd arrived at 3:27 p.m.

Mr. Sullivan continued by stating that they felt it was appropriate to introduce some art pieces that are sculpted in to the MSE panels. They would be at a lower level and randomly scattered. In terms of landscaping, the idea is that there is a variation of landscape sections and wall panel sections. Some areas are quite covered with landscape and other areas are more open. They will use consistent colors throughout the project.

There has been discussion about this whole package having an artist involved. This came up early in the process, but time and budget are factors. The overall scheme of the art component is in the panels, and it can be introduced at a later time as well. Mr. Scheer stated that his experience is you cannot apply art later; rather, it should be a part of the process. He believes that this project could have been viewed as a venue for art. Mr. Sullivan stated that his perspective is the art panels address the scale issue. Ms. Hjermstad stated that they agree with Mr. Scheer, and as we go further with this project, they want to integrate art. Mr. Scheer added that it does go to scale and the issue of applying art in one way breaks down the scale, but in another way shows what a huge urban structure this is. He questioned why we wouldn't think about an approach of doing a more massive landscape effort because of the magnitude of this project. Ms. Todd stated that she would support something between scattered and completely screened because of the security issue. Ms. Wells noted that in a lot of the areas, there is only a 10-15 foot area, and she was concerned about safety as well. Mr. Oforah stated that he agrees with adding more landscaping. He added that he hopes that the paths would be lit.

Ms. Todd suggested not using the art panels but use the wave and texture pattern and a lot of plant material.

Mr. Scheer offered a constructive criticism in that we must understand that this project is a chance for significant improvement in Lincoln. There is a concern with making sure we understand as a community what Antelope Valley is conceptually. If we can be honest with our materials, he believes we will be okay. But if we lose sight of that, then there is a chance that we will look back at this and say maybe we are not doing as much revitalization as we should.

Ms. Hjermstad stated that her concern is the North Bottoms side in terms of designing a structure that is so massive without destroying the neighborhood.

Mr. Scheer stated that he would support Kim's recommendation. He feels that rather than having us

looking at this as an engineered bridge, the next time look at it as an art project.

Ms. Kissel stated that her concern is the North Bottoms side as the approach does not feel warm or that it makes the neighborhood a better place.

Mr. Oforah asked if there has been adequate public input. Ms. Hjermstad stated that there have been several public meetings, although materials have not been included as part of the meetings.

Mr. Scheer noted that he supports doing the wave pattern and intensifying the landscaping. Ms. Wells noted that more landscaping could be added, but one of the issues is there is only a 10-15 foot span in some places. Mr. Oforah noted that he would like to see some columnar trees.

Mr. Scholz departed at 4:13 p.m.

Ms. Todd moved to advise the design team to keep the wave pattern and rock texture, remove the house design and art squares, and enhance the landscaping, concentrating on trees more than shrubs; it was seconded by Mr. Oforah. Mr. Eckert commented that he believes landscaping is the key element. Eckert, Kissel, Oforah, Todd, and Scheer voting 'yes'; Sullivan abstaining; Scholz absent.

Enersen Urban Design Award

Mr. Zimmer reminded the committee that if they have suggestions for the Enersen award to inform him.

Staff Report/Miscellaneous

There was no discussion on this agenda item.

Mr. Scheer adjourned the meeting at 4:20 p.m.